

Irene Gott

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SKIN STRUCTURE

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SUNLIGHT

We now know that the solar energy is responsible for up to 80% of the skin damage we associate with "ageing". It's true. If we lived our lives indoors, common skin conditions such as fine lines, dark blotches (hyperpigmentation) and skin cancer would be far more rare..

As many of you know, the sun protection in skin care products is often referred to as UV protection. UV stands for Ultra Violet and this is an invisible type of light that the sun emits.

It is important to note that traditional SPF ratings DO NOT necessarily protect you from these ageing rays, however Broad Spectrum UVA/UVB offers you the ultimate protection.



How Do you Protect Your Skin Against UVA and UVB?

We're dedicated to keeping your skin looking healthy as well as beautiful.

Current statistics suggest that getting six or more sunburns in your life significantly increases your risk of skin cancer, so many of our moisturisers and foundations contain an SPF15 and broad spectrum UVA/UVB protection to help preserve your beauty year-round.

We have also created a collection of bronzers and other cosmetics which can give your skin a sun-kissed look without the risks associated with prolonged UV exposure.

UVC - wavelengths are completely filtered by the ozone layer and therefore we are naturally protected. However, the other 2 classes of UV light penetrate through the ozone and are both damaging and can lead to cancer - therefore protection is a must in order to maintain fit skin.

UVB rays penetrate the top layers of the skin, causing sunburn, premature ageing and skin cancer. These UVB rays cannot penetrate through glass. Traditional SPF ratings protect you against these UVB rays.

UVA rays penetrate more slowly and penetrate deeper into the epidermis and even the dermis to break down collagen and elastin and causing hyperpigmentation. UVA rays can penetrate glass and therefore can even cause damage when you think you are protected.



A few facts about our skin:

- Skin has three layers - the epidermis, dermis and subdermis,
- Skin is the largest organ of the body
- It covers over 21 square feet (2 square meters) and can weigh up to 7 pounds (3 kg)
- Average adult skin comprises over 300 million skin cells

1. The Epidermis: This is the surface of your skin.

It's the area that you touch, feel and see. This layer is only about as thick as a sheet of fine paper, but it is what provides your skin with all of its barrier properties and helps keep out sunlight, germs, bacteria, heat and cold.

The outermost layer of the epidermis is called the stratum corneum. The stratum corneum is made up of flattened cells about 20 layers thick. Each cell is coated with humectants to keep them moist and flexible, surrounded by special lipids to block in moisture.

What the epidermis does:

- Deflects damage from sun, dirt and bacteria
- Helps regulate body temperature
- Prevents moisture loss

2. The Dermis:

Below the epidermis lies the dermis, or 'true skin'. This is the layer that provides skin with character and vitality. Here is the collagen - the springy fibres that give skin 'bounce'. Think of collagen fibres as coils in a mattress. A mattress without coils would be fragile, flat and have no spring. The same goes for your skin.

Here are also elastin fibres (polypeptide chains) are loosely interwoven, flexible bands that provide skin with the ability to stretch and return to its original shape. Hence the term 'elasticity'. The dermis also contains the sweat and oil glands that keep skin supple and hydrated.

What the dermis does:

- Provides moisture to the epidermis
- Produces the collagen which keeps skin firm
- Produces the elastin which keeps skin flexible
- Generates sebum which keeps skin supple and moist

3. The Subdermis:

The subdermis forms the supportive base of the trio. Here we find an extensive network of connective tissue, laced with fat cells. Here also are the muscles that control facial movement. These muscles play a key role in supporting skin's structure. In time, these muscles may weaken, leading to the formation of the lines and wrinkles that are characterised as expression lines.

What the subdermis does:

- Gives skin its shape and contour
- Cushions the outer layers
- Connects skin to underlying tissues and muscles

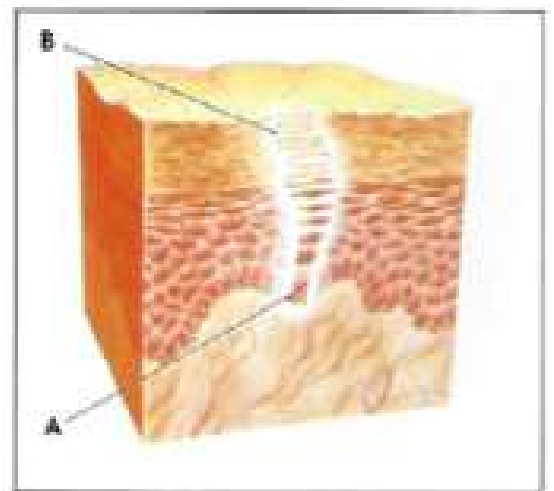
A. New skin cells form at the base of the epidermis and slowly move upward, losing moisture and flattening as they go. The bottom section of the epidermis is called the basal layer. Basal cells are responsible for maintaining the epidermis by continually renewing the cell population.

Your skin is in a constant state of regeneration. New cells are born at the base of the epidermis and slowly migrate to the surface. There they are sloughed off and replaced by new cells. This cycle takes two to three weeks when skin is young, and twice that long when skin is mature.

B. When the cells begin their journey, they are plump and moist. As they travel upward they begin to flatten and dry out. When they reach the stratum corneum they resemble scales.

This layer of scaly surface cells is called the horny layer. The cells in the basal layer also contain melanocytes, specialized cells which produce the melanin that gives skin its colour. All Ultraviolet rays signal the melanocytes - making cells in your skin - step up production and darken.

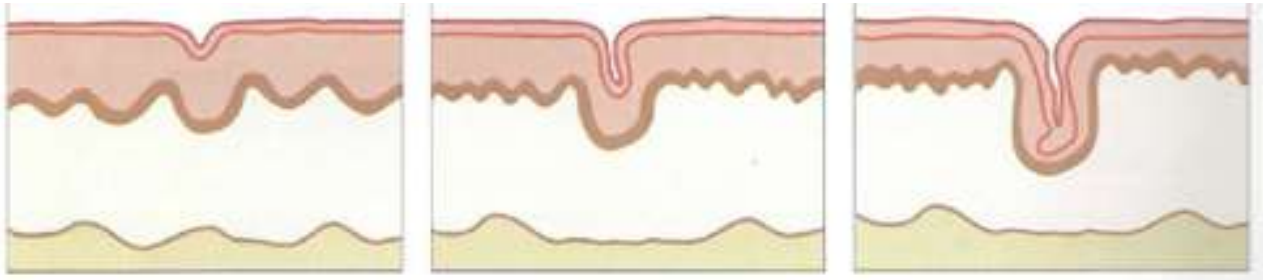
People who get freckles have a genetic code that causes their melanocytes to produce irregularly, some producing no melanin when exposed to the sun, others producing more, darkening the skin unevenly.



WHAT IS A WRINKLE?

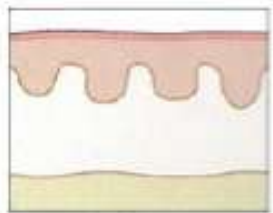
Wrinkles are the lines and creases that form in your skin. They represent surface evidence of damage within the skin. They occur as a result of ageing, which can be caused by factors that are either controllable or uncontrollable. The factors of ageing - controllable or uncontrollable - all affect skin's appearance and resiliency.

As time goes by and the integrity of skin is impacted, it regenerates more slowly and loses the ability to repair itself. Collagen production diminishes, the elastin network loosens, muscles in the subdermis slacken and skin simply cannot 'bounce back'.



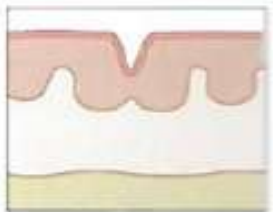
As we age, the collagen and elastin in the dermis become more damaged, and wrinkles begin to appear. The skin's natural defences become overwhelmed and skin damage begins to accumulate. Finally, the skin becomes deeply wrinkled and unhealthy in appearance.

Collagen and elastin have been severely damaged by environmental stress. As you get older, the skin's recovery process slows down and can no longer correct this damage.



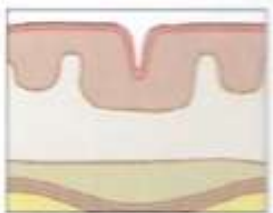
What is an expression line?

Expression lines are the end result of the 15,000 expressions we make daily! Over time, repeated motions like frowning, smiling and squinting make permanent imprints in the skin because the restorative process is impaired.



How does an expression line form?

Expression lines, our "life lines", are typically the first lines to form, popping up in places like the forehead, between and at the corner of the eyes and around the mouth. Here's a closer look at exactly how these "life lines" form.



HOW TO RECOGNISE DIFFERENT SKIN TYPES:

No two skins are alike. We all have individual characteristics.

Start with examining of the T-Zone. Follow by looking at the cheek and eye areas. Take your time and look at the following characteristics: texture, pore size, blemishes, and fine lines. By looking at the T-Zone and cheek and eye areas, you will soon see that most people have either normal-to-dry or normal-to-oily skin.

The T-Zone is the T-shaped region of the face which includes the forehead, the nose and chin. The skin in the T-Zone is often different from skin in the cheek and eye areas since it is usually somewhat oilier than the rest of the face.

SKIN TYPES CAN BE DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL BROAD CATEGORIES

- Normal-to-dry
- Normal-to oily
- Combination
- Sensitive

Normal-to-oily skin

- Skin has oily sheen
- Enlarged pores
- Minimal fine lines
- Blemishes are common

Sensitive Skin

- Skin is easily irritated
- May suffer from stinging, itching, redness and blotchiness

Normal-to-dry skin

- Skin appears taut, fragile and dull with fine pores
- Dry flaking and fine lines may occur
- Blemishes are rare

Combination skin is a combination of both oily and dry skin. Usually there is a greasy centre panel, consisting of nose, forehead and chin, and a dry panel consisting of cheeks, mouth and the areas around the eyes. This type of skin type should be treated as if it were two different skintypes.

Sensitive skin is not a skin type, but rather a skin condition that requires special care. If you have sensitive skin, oily and dry characteristics become a secondary concern. It is important to care for the skin condition rather than the skin type.

